

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3757

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, KU

SUBJ: AL-QABAS INTERVIEW WITH ASAD

REF: KUWAIT 3963

SUMMARY: IN THE EVENT THE DEPARTMENT AND INFO ADDRESSES HAVE NOT RECEIVED IT FROM OTHER SOURCES, HIGHLIGHTS ARE SUPPLIED OF THE INTERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER 22 OF SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASAD AS PUBLISHED IN THE KUWAITI DAILY NEWSPAPER, AL-QABAS. SENSITIVE EGYPTIAN/ SYRIAN CABLES PUBLISHED WITH THE INTERVIEW ARE DESCRIBED. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING HIGHLIGHTS ARE SUPPLIED OF INTERVIEW ON SEPTEMBER -9 OF SYRIAN PCESIDENT ASAD BY RAAOUF SHOHOURI, CHIEF EDITOR OF KUWAITI DAILY AL-QABAS. INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN KUWAIT SEPTEMBER 25.

QUESTION: EGYPT CANNOT SIGN A THIRD DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT ON SINAI WITHOUT ACTION ON GOLAN. SYRIA WILL NOT SIGN A NEW UNCLASSIFIED

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AGREEMENT ON GOLAN UNDER THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT AND, THERE-

FORE, WILL NOT GO TO GENEVA. EGYPT WILL NOT GO TO GENEVA WITHOUT SYRIA AND THE PALESTINIANS. DOES THAT MEAN A RETURN TO THE STATE OF "NO WAR - NO PEACE" AND TO AN ARAB COLD WAR?

ANSWER: THIS VAGUE, NON-ARAB AND IMPORTED TERM "NO PEACE AND NO WAR" WAS IN FACT PREPARATION FOR WAR. ISRAEL IS A RACIALLY AGGRESSIVE AND EXPANSIONIST STATE -- FROM THE NILE TO THE EUPHRATES. SYRIA IS NEITHER AGAINST SADAT NOR AGAINST ANYONE IN EGYPT. OUR FATE IS TO BE WITH EGYPT IN ONE TRENCH. SYRIA DOES NOT WANT WAR FOR THE SAKE OF WAR. NATURALLY, ALL WARS END (U.S.-VIETNAM'S DID) WITH AGREEMENTS. SYRIA DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE SINAI ACCORD. SYRIA WAS NOT CONSULTED ABOUT IT. THE AGREEMENT HAS TERMS THAT ARE DETRIMENTAL TO EGYPT AND TO THE WHOLE ARAB CAUSE. NO PEOPLE CAN SAY I ONLY CAN RESTORE MY OCCUPIED LANDS BY PEACEFUL MEANS. THAT ADMITS OCCUPATION. ALLOWING SHIPMENTS THROUGH THE CANAL IN THE PAST IS NOT JUSTIFICATION FOR ALLOWING IT NOW. THE PRESENCE OF SMUGGLED TOBACCO, FOR INSTANCE, DOES NOT ADMIT THE LEGALITY OF ITS PRESENCE. IF IT IS TRUE THAT ENEMY SHIPMENTS PASSED THROUGH THE CANAL IN THE PAST, THAT MEANS THEY WERE SMUGGLED AND ARE ILLEGAL. DR. KISSINGER ONCE WAS ASKED IN DAMASCUS "IF YOU WERE IN A STATE OF WAR WITH THE SOVIET UNION, AND YOUR LANDS WERE NOT EVEN OCCUPIED, WOULD YOU LET SOVIET SHIPMENTS PASS THROUGH YOUR LANDS?" KISSINGER DID NOT ANSWER. HIS SILENCE MEANT NO. HOW THEN CAN THE ARABS ALLOW SHIPMENTS THROUGH SUEZ TO ISRAEL? WAR REQUIRES PREPARATIONS. ISRAEL DID NOT LEARN SUFFICIENTLY FROM THE OCTOBER WAR. POLITICAL ACTION HAS NOT YIELDED DESIRED RESULTS. SYRIA AND ISRAEL HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN A STATE OF WAR -- BATTLES NEVER STOPPED. THE "NO WAR - NO PEACE" TERM IS NOT PRECISE ... AND IF THE STATE OF NO WAR AND NO PEACE IS AN EVIL, THEN THE STATE OF PEACE WITH THE ENEMY IS A GREATER EVIL.

QUESTION: IS IT POSSIBLE TO CANCEL THE SINAI AGREEMENT, PRACTICALLY, LEGALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY?

ANSWER: YES. NAHHAS PASHA SIGNED A TREATY WITH ENGLAND AND LATER CANCELLED IT BY SAYING ... "FOR EGYPT I SIGNED THE TREATY AND FOR EGYPT I DECLARE IT CANCELLED." EGYPT CAN NOW DO THE SAME WITH A SLIGHT ALTERATION, "AND FOR THE ARABS I DECLARE IT CANCELLED." AN ACCORD SIMILAR TO THAT OF SINAI WAS PROPOSED TO JORDAN. ISRAEL'S PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL FOR A FEW KILOMETERS UNDER THE UNCLASSIFIED

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SAME CONDITIONS. HOWEVER, JORDAN REFUSED.

QUESTION: NEWSWEEK SAID THAT A WAR BY SYRIA AND JORDAN ALONE WOULD NOT BE A MIRACLE. WOULD JORDAN'S ARMY REPLACE EGYPT'S ARMY? JORDAN DID NOT OPEN ITS LONG FRONT IN THE OCTOBER WAR. WHY DOES SYRIA BELIEVE THAT JORDAN WILL ENTER THE WAR THIS TIME WHEN EGYPT, AS SYRIA SAYS, HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED?

ANSWER: SYRIA WANTS TO RESTORE THE BALANCE. THIS IS DIFFICULT BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE. SYRIA'S POPULATION IS 9 MILLION, ALL SYRIANS ARE TRAINED AND SYRIA CAN MOBILIZE ONE MILLION SOLDIERS. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE POTENTIAL OF OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES. EGYPT'S ATTEMPT TO FREEZE THE EGYPTIAN FRONT SHOULD STIMULATE US TO TAKE MORE ACTION. HOWEVER, SYRIA HOPES THAT EGYPT WILL RE-CONSIDER ITS ATTITUDE.

QUESTION: IF A NEW SEPARATION AGREEMENT IN GOLAN SHOULD REQUIRE SOVIET EXPERTS ON THE SYRIAN FRONT -- LIKE THE AMERICAN EXPERTS IN SINAI -- WOULD SYRIA AGREE?

ANSWER: ISRAEL WILL NOT ACCEPT SOVIET EXPERTS BECAUSE IT CONSIDERS THE SOVIETS WITH THE ARABS. AMERICAN EXPERTS IN SINAI ARE LINKED WITH "EARLY WARNING STATIONS." NOTHING IN GOLAN WILL JUSTIFY THAT. THE PRESENCE OF SOVIET EXPERTS DEPENDED ON EGYPT. THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN EXPERTS IS DIFFERENT. KISSINGER SAID IN DAMASCUS THAT IT WAS ISRAEL WHICH INSISTED ON THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN EXPERTS IN SINAI (NOT HIS PRECISE WORDS). HOWEVER, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE AMERICAN EXPERTS' PRESENCE IN SINAI FAVORS ISRAEL. ISRAEL WILL NOT, NOW OR EVER, ASK FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE AMERICAN EXPERTS FROM SINAI.

QUESTION: THERE ARE EXPECTATIONS THAT ISRAEL IS PREPARING AGGRESSION AGAINST SYRIA IN NOVEMBER AT THE END OF THE UNDOF'S TERM IN GOLAN ...

ANSWER: AGGRESSION BY ISRAEL IS NOT IMPOSSIBLE. ISRAEL IS BASED ON AGGRESSION. SYRIA WILL FIGHT ANY BATTLE IMPOSED ON IT ...

QUESTION: WOULD SYRIA ACCEPT A KUWAITI INITIATIVE -- SUCH AS THE MEETING OF ASAD AND SADAT -- IN KUWAIT?

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ANSWER: THE EARLIER MEETING IN KUWAIT WAS PREARRANGED TO DISCUSS CERTAIN ISSUES. IT WAS HELD IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE CEASEFIRE. IT DEALT WITH SCHEDULED ISSUES AND THE RESPECTIVE POINTS OF VIEW OF SYRIA AND EGYPT.

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QUESTION: WHAT IS THE STORY OF THE CEASEFIRE IN THE OCTOBER WAR?

ANSWER: FOR MONTHS AND YEARS MEETINGS WERE HELD BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. THE WAR DECISION WAS TAKEN MUTUALLY AND JOINTLY. THE DECISION TO CEASE-FIRE WAS TAKEN UNILATERALLY. HAD SYRIA NOT AGREED TO WAR, WOULD EGYPT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WAGE WAR? THE LAST CABLES EXCHANGED INDICATE CLEARLY THAT SYRIA WAS ADVERSE TO THE IDEA OF A CEASEFIRE. PRESIDENT SADAT'S CABLE SHOWS THAT HE INFORMED THE SOVIETS FIRST AND THE SYRIANS LATER. OUR REPLY WAS SENT ONE AND ONE-HALF HOURS AFTER THE RECEIPT OF SADAT'S CABLE. SADAT WAS PRESENT AT HIS HEADQUARTERS FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS A DAY. INFORMATION CONTINUOUSLY WAS EXCHANGED ON THE MILITARY SITUATION ON BOTH FRONTS. THROUGH COORDINATION, BOTH COMMANDS HAD A COMPLETE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION, THE DEPLOYMENT OF FORCES, ADVANCES AND RETREATS, THE SIZE OF ENEMY FORCES. UPON RECEIPT OF SADAT'S CABLE, HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS WERE HELD AT OUR HEADQUARTERS. SYRIA DID NOT SEE ANYTHING THAT CALLED FOR ANXIETY. DURING THAT TIME AMERICAN SUPPLIES WERE BEING RECEIVED BY ISRAEL ON BOTH THE SINAI AND GOLAN FRONTS, AS SYRIA HAD EXPECTED. SADAT'S CABLE MENTIONED PROPOSALS NOT KNOWN TO SYRIA. FAHMI LATER TOLD SYRIA UNCLASSIFIED

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ABOUT THEM. SADAT'S REFERENCE TO THE FACT THAT "HE IS PREPARED TO BE CALLED TO ACCOUNT BY THE PEOPLE" DISCLOSES A FEELING OF ERGHR. SADAT WAS NOT ALWAYS PRESENT DURING THE WAR IN THE OPERATIONS ROOM. HE SOMETIMES WAS AT THE AL-TAHIRAH PALACE. THE BREACH (ON THE FRONT), IN SYRIA'S OPINION, WAS IMAGINED AND IT

WAS POSSIBLE TO DESTROY IT.

QUESTION: WHAT CAN THE ARABS DO TO SAVE ARAB SOLIDARITY?

ANSWER: ARAB SOLIDARITY CAN BEAR MANY FRUITS IN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CULTURAL FIELDS. HOWEVER, IT SHOULD FIRST AND FOREMOST BE STRENGTHENED IN THE FACE OF THE ENEMY. SYRIA WILL NOT ACCEPT SOLIDARITY THAT IS EXPRESSED IN ANY OTHER CONCEPT OR DIRECTION.

2. THE ABOVE TEXT WAS PUBLISHED ALONG WITH PHOTOSTATS OF AN EXCHANGE OF TELEGRAMS, DATED OCTOBER 21, 1973, BETWEEN PRESIDENT SADAT AND PRESIDENT ASAD. THE FORMER ADVISED SADAT OF THE CRITICAL SITUATION ON THE EGYPTIAN FRONT AND SAID, INTER ALIA, "IT HAS BECOME CLEAR TO ME THAT I AM FIGHTING AMERICA AND I CANNOT BEAR THE HISTORICAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF MY FORCES AGAIN." SADAT ADDED THAT HE HAD NOTIFIED THE USSR OF HIS ACCEPTANCE OF A CEASEFIRE ON THE CONDITION THAT (A) "RUSSIA AND AMERICA GUARANTEE ISRAEL'S WITHDRAWAL AS PROPOSED BY RUSSIA; AND, (B) INITIATE A PEACE CONFERENCE IN THE UN AND CONCLUDE THE COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT PROPOSED BY RUSSIA. THE SYRIAN RESPONSE URGED THAT EGYPT NOT ACCEPT A CEASEFIRE, SUGGESTED THE BREACH COULD BE CLOSED AND ASKED THAT FIGHTING BE CONTINUED. THE CAPTION UNDER THE ABOVE PHOTOSTATS READS "NO ANSWER WAS RECEIVED FROM CAIRO TO PRESIDENT ASAD'S CABLE. THE CEASEFIRE TOOK PLACE AND THE REST OF THE STORY IS WELL KNOWN."
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